



From: **Office of the Mayor**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **City of Cleveland Issues Statement on Denison Avenue United Church of Christ**

**CLEVELAND** — The City of Cleveland has issued the following statement regarding the Denison Avenue United Church of Christ:

*“The City of Cleveland first became aware in September, through Cleveland City Council, of the Denison Avenue United Church of Christ (UCC)’s intent to house people overnight. At that time the Department of Building & Housing (B&H) was in communication with the church about what was necessary for it to become a temporary R-1 transient use facility, noting that certain requirements would need to be met. Requirements include an application to B&H for review. The review would include egress, fire protection and life safety measures. The local community development corporation contacted B&H claiming the church was already housing people overnight. B&H sent out an inspector on Dec. 6 and the church committed to making an application for the change of use.*

*On Dec. 20, a violation order was issued by B&H. [Click here to read the violation notice.](#) The church has 30 days to appeal the order. The City was told by the church it would file the appeal but as of today has not received it. The church is still welcome to submit a temporary R-1 transient use application, which would give it 180 days to operate its shelter. If the application were rejected because upgrades to, for example, a sprinkler system were not made, the findings could be appealed and the review board could consider a variance.*

*In addition, the Division of Fire had a number of safety concerns. On Tuesday Dec. 24, prior to issuing its Cease Use order, Fire Chief Angelo Calvillo met with church officials to discuss the City’s concerns about not meeting fire codes for residential facilities. The church can appeal the order within seven days of its issuance. Should the church continue to house people during that time, the Division of Fire will require someone to serve as a fire watch. The fire watch is required to monitor the area for fire, alert*

*occupants, report it and make basic attempts to extinguish the fire. This person is not required to be a firefighter. [Click here to view the Cease Use letter.](#)*

*The church's current legal use is for assembly. In order to change it for temporary residential use (R1) – which would not affect its operations as a worship space - the Denison Avenue UCC would be required to apply for a change of use with the Department of Building & Housing.*

*These codes and standards are in place so that in the event of an emergency, those inside are as safe as possible.*

*Additional updates will be posted to GovQA.”*

### **About the City of Cleveland**

The City of Cleveland is committed to improving the quality of life for its residents by strengthening neighborhoods, delivering superior services, embracing diversity and making Cleveland a desirable, safe city in which to live, work, play, and do business. For more information on the City of Cleveland, visit online at [www.city.cleveland.oh.us](http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us), Twitter at @cityofcleveland or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/cityofcleveland](https://www.facebook.com/cityofcleveland).